

Consumer Information and Procedures

-- Deposits

When A Utility May Require A Deposit

If you are not an established customer of the telephone company, you may be required to pay a deposit in order to obtain telephone service. Under the Illinois Commerce Commission rules, you are considered to be a customer of the telephone company as long as your service has not been disconnected for nonpayment. If your service has been shut-off for nonpayment you are no longer considered to be a customer of the telephone company. Also if tampering is discovered and you benefited from the tampering, you will most likely be required to pay a deposit.

Residential Customers

If you are not an established customer of the telephone company, you may be required to pay a deposit in order to obtain telephone service. Under the Illinois Commerce Commission rules, you are considered to be a customer of the telephone company as long as your service has not been disconnected for nonpayment. If your service has been shut-off for nonpayment you are no longer considered to be a customer of the telephone company. Also if tampering is discovered and you benefited from the tampering, you will most likely be required to pay a deposit.

Present Customers: During the first 12 months of service a company may require you to pay a deposit if you pay late four times or have your service temporarily disconnected* for nonpayment two times. However, the company must tell you that you can change your billing date before the company can ask for a deposit because of late payments.

Non-Residential Customers

Applicants For Service: If the company finds that an applicant for telephone service has failed to pay for past service provided by that company, the company may require a deposit. A company may also require a deposit from an applicant for service if the applicant is unable to provide satisfactory credit reference. Bills or credit history for a customer's residential service will not be added to that customer's non-residential account.

Present Customers: After the first 12 months of service a company may require you to pay a deposit if in any 12 month period you:

- have paid late six times;
- have had service disconnected two times; or
- used a device or scheme to obtain service without payment.

Amount Of Deposit

For residential applicants and current customers, deposits can be no more than twice the average monthly bill (based on the past six months). For nonresidential applicants and current customers, deposits can be no more than four times the average monthly bill (based on the past six months). If a customer or applicant does not have six months of service with the company, the company may use the average monthly bill for that class and type of service to determine the amount of deposit. The amount of the deposit may be adjusted at any time at the request of the customer, applicant, or company if the amount of service used will substantially change.

The company may ask that at least one-third of the deposit amount be paid within 12 days of the deposit request. An applicant for service may be requested to pay at least one-third of the deposit amount prior to obtaining service. The company must allow the customer at least two monthly billing periods to pay the balance.

Interest On Deposits

The company will pay interest on your deposit. The rate of interest is set by the Commission each December, based upon the existing rate for one-year U.S. Treasury Bills. If the deposit is not refunded after 12 months, the company will credit the interest on your bill annually.

Refunding Of Deposits

The company must refund your deposit plus interest after 12 months, unless:

- service was disconnected for nonpayment, or
- you have paid late 4 times in any 12 month period, or
- you benefited from tampering with the telephone equipment

If there are any past due bills for telephone service the company is not required to refund the deposit to you even if all the conditions listed above are met. All deposit refunds must be paid to you by separate check, not as a credit to your bill. However, the company may use the deposit to pay any amounts you owe if your service is terminated or discontinued.

Record Keeping

The company is responsible for providing you with a Certificate of Deposit for any deposit received. The certificate will show your name, service address, serial number, type of service, amount of deposit, and the date received. It is very important that you keep your certificate for future use in the event a problem should arise.

Guarantee In Lieu Of Deposit

Instead of a deposit, a company must accept the written guarantee from a responsible party for payment of a residential service account. A responsible party is any current customer of the same company with at least 12 months service, and whose service has not been discontinued for nonpayment of bills or a requested deposit in the most recent 12 months.

The company's guarantee form must be approved by and filed with the Illinois Commerce Commission.

A company must accept a Surety Bond instead of a cash deposit if you wish to provide one. However, the Surety Bond must be issued by an insurance company that has been authorized by the State Department of Insurance to do business in Illinois.